

About Helena Basilova

Among the many clichés surrounding Russia, perhaps none is more persistent than nostalgia for a time Russians may never have known. Helena Basilova, born in Russia to two established pianists/composers but raised in The Netherlands and currently living in Amsterdam, subverts all the other stereotypes. But her personal history did – undeniably - instill a sense of melancholy in her. This wishfulness is never stronger than in her connection to Russian music and its widespread influence in (Eastern) Europe. Though Helena performs repertoire from all periods and styles, it has led Helena time and again to Russian composers such as Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Scriabin and Shostakovich.

Her piano career took off after being awarded the 'Debut Series Concert Tour' in March 2008. She performed at major venues in The Netherlands, including The Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. This tour led to concerts all over Europe including, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Iceland, Russia and the Americas. More recently, Helena performed Scriabin's 9th sonata at Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall and Shostakovich's Second Piano Concerto at Symphony Space New York City.

Having a special connection to the music by Leos Janacek resulted in the recording of a CD with piano works by this Czech composer released in January 2013 by Quintone Records. This CD has garnered praise by European press leading to concerts in Japan, India, The States, Russia and Denmark.

Besides her solo career Helena has a big love for chamber music, last season she played Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time in New York and Beethoven's violin sonatas in San Antonio, Texas. Helena also feels that it is very important to widen the scope and reach of classical music, both for its own sake and to inspire artistic crossovers. With that in mind, she composed a program of Russian piano music combined with the poetry of Anna Ahmatova and Osip Mandelstam. She also collaborates frequently with contemporary jazz musicians and finds it important to be in touch with living composers that write music right now. In December 2012 Helena premiered a newly written work by Molly Herron, specially written and dedicated to her.

Plans for 2014-2015 include solo recitals in Moscow, New York City, Copenhagen, India, China, an educational project in high schools around Olivier Messiaen, chamber music projects with Reinier Baas (guitar), Diamanda le Berge Dramm (violin), Eva van Grinsven (saxophone) and the start of a new long-term project: performing and publishing music of her past-away father/ composer Alexander Basilov.

Helena Basilova has received scholarships from NYU, Nuffic, NFPK, Prins Bernard Cultuurfonds and currently lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Text: Wouter de longh